



Iranian protesters attend an anti-Israeli gathering to condemn killing members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in Syria, at the Felestin (Palestine) Sq. in downtown Tehran, Iran, Monday, April 1, 2024.

Associated Press

U.S. braces for retaliation after attack on Iran consulate — even as it says it wasn't involved

**By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and
LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Shortly after an airstrike widely attributed to Israel destroyed an Iranian consulate building in Syria, the United States had an urgent message for Iran: We had nothing to do with it. But that may not be enough for the U.S. to avoid retaliation targeting its forces in the region. A top U.S. commander warned on Wednesday of danger to American troops. And if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent broadening of targeted strikes on adversaries around

the region to include Iranian security operatives and leaders deepens regional hostilities, analysts say, it's not clear the United States can avoid being pulled into deeper regional conflict as well. The Biden administration insists it had no advance knowledge of the airstrike Monday. But the United States is closely tied to Israel's military regardless. The U.S. remains Israel's indispensable ally and unstinting supplier of weapons, responsible for some 70% of Israeli weapon imports and an estimated 15% of Israel's defense budget. That includes pro-

viding the kind of advanced aircraft and munitions that appear to have been employed in the attack. Israel hasn't acknowledged a role in the airstrike, but Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said Tuesday that the U.S. has assessed Israel was responsible. Multiple arms of Iran's government served notice that they would hold the United States accountable for the fiery attack. The strike, in the Syrian capital of Damascus, killed senior commanders of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for Syria and Lebanon, an officer of the

powerful Iran-allied Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, and others.

American forces in Syria and Iraq already are frequent targets when Iran and its regional allies seek retaliation for strikes by Israelis, notes Charles Lister, the Syria program director for the Middle East Institute.

"What the Iranians have always done for years when they have felt most aggressively targeted by Israel is not to hit back at Israelis, but Americans," seeing them as soft targets in the region, Lister said.

On Wednesday in Washing-

ton, the top U.S. Air Force commander for the Middle East, Lt. Gen. Alexis Grynke-wich, said Iran's assertion that the U.S. bears responsibility for Israeli actions could bring an end to a pause in militia attacks on U.S. forces that has lasted since early February.

He said he sees no specific threat to U.S. troops right now, but "I am concerned because of the Iranian rhetoric talking about the U.S., that there could be a risk to our forces."

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U.S. braces for retaliation after attack on Iran consulate — even as it says it wasn't involved



In this photo released by the official Syrian state news agency SANA, emergency service workers clear the rubble at a destroyed building struck by Israeli jets in Damascus, Syria, Monday, April 1, 2024.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

U.S. officials have recorded more than 150 attacks by Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria on U.S. forces at bases in those countries since war between Hamas and Israel began on Oct. 7.

One, in late January, killed three U.S. service members and injured dozens more at a base in Jordan.

In retaliation, the U.S. launched a massive air assault, hitting more than 85 targets at seven locations in Iraq and Syria, including command and control headquarters, drone and ammunition storage sites and other facilities connected to the militias or the IRGC's Quds Force, the Guard's expeditionary unit that handles Tehran's relationship with and arming of regional militias. There have been no publicly reported attacks on U.S. troops in the region since that response. Grynkeiwich told reporters the U.S. is watching and listening carefully to what

Iran is saying and doing to evaluate how Tehran might respond.

Analysts and diplomats cite a range of ways Iran could retaliate.

Since Oct. 7, Iran and the regional militias allied to it in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen have followed a strategy of calibrated attacks that stop short of triggering an all-out conflict that could subject Iran's homeland forces or Hezbollah to full-blown war with Israel or the United States.

Beyond strikes on U.S. troops, possibilities for Iranian retaliation could include a limited missile strike directly from Iranian soil to Israel, Lister said. That would reciprocate for Israel's strike on what under international law was sovereign Iranian soil, at the Iranian diplomatic building in Damascus.

A concentrated attack on a U.S. position abroad on the scale of the 1983 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Beirut is possible, but seems unlikely given the scale of U.S. re-

taliation that would draw, analysts say. Iran also could escalate an existing effort to kill Trump-era officials behind the United States' 2020 drone killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani.

How far any other retaliation and potential escalation goes may depend on two things out of U.S. control: Whether Iran wants to keep regional hostilities at their current level or escalate, and whether Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's far-right government does.

Sina Toossi, a fellow at the Center for International Policy, said analysts in Iran are among those trying to read Netanyahu's mind since the attack, struggling to choose between two competing narratives for Israel's objective.

"One perceives Israel's actions as a deliberate provocation of war that Iran should respond to with restraint," Toossi wrote in the U.S.-based think tank's journal. "The other suggests that Israel is capitalizing on Iran's typically

restrained responses," and that failing to respond in kind will only embolden Israel. Ultimately, Iran's sense that it is already winning its strategic goals as the Hamas-Israel war continues — elevating the Palestinian cause and costing Israel friends globally — may go the furthest in persuading Iranian leaders not to risk open warfare with Israel or U.S. in whatever response they make to Monday's airstrike, some analysts and diplomats say.

Shira Efron, a director of policy research at the U.S.-based Israel Policy Forum, rejected suggestions that Netanyahu was actively trying with attacks like the one in Damascus to draw the U.S. into a potentially decisive conflict alongside Israel against their common rivals, at least for now. "First, the risk of escalation has increased. No doubt," Efron said.

"I don't think Netanyahu is interested in full-blown war though," she said. "And whereas in the past Israel was thought to be interested in

drawing the U.S. into a greater conflict, even if the desire still exists in some circles, it is not more than wishful thinking at the moment."

U.S. President Joe Biden is facing pressure from the other direction.

So far he's resisting calls from growing numbers of Democratic lawmakers and voters to limit the flow of American arms to Israel as a way to press Netanyahu to ease Israeli military killing of civilians in Gaza and to heed other U.S. appeals.

As criticism has grown of U.S. military support of Israel's war in Gaza, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller has increasingly pointed to Israel's longer-term need for weapons — to defend itself against Iran and Iranian-allied Hezbollah in Lebanon. The U.S. is "always concerned about anything that would be escalatory," Miller said after the attack in Damascus. "It has been one of the goals of this administration since October 7th to keep the conflict from spreading, recognizing that Israel has the right to defend itself from adversaries that are sworn to its destruction."

Israel for years has hit at Iranian proxies and their sites in the region, knocking back their ability to build strength and cause trouble for Israelis. Since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, one of a network of Iran-aligned militias in the region, that shattered Israel's sense of security, Netanyahu's government has increasingly added Iranian security operatives and leaders to target lists in the region, Lister notes.

The U.S. military already has deepened engagement from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea since the Hamas-Israel war opened — deploying aircraft carriers to the region to discourage rear-guard attacks against Israel, opening airstrikes to quell attacks on shipping by Iran-allied Houthis in Yemen. It is also moving to build a pier off Gaza to try to get more aid to Palestinian civilians despite obstacles that include Israel's restrictions and attacks on aid deliveries. □

Yes, we're divided. But new AP-NORC poll shows Americans still agree on most core American values

By **GARY FIELDS** and **AMELIA THOMSON DEVEAUX**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite the country's deep political polarization, most Americans share many core beliefs about what it means to be an American, according to a new poll.

The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 9 in 10 U.S. adults say the right to vote, the right to equal protection under the law and the right to privacy are extremely important or very important to the United States' identity as a nation. The survey also found that 84% feel the same way about the freedom of religion.

The results, which included perspectives on a number of different freedoms and rights, have only small variances between Republicans and Democrats except on the right to bear arms, which Republicans are more likely to see as core to the nation's identity. The overall findings are striking because they come at a time of extreme partisanship when political agreements seem rare and concerns are heightened over the potential for violence during a volatile presidential election year. "If you get a bunch of normal people at random and put them in a room together and chat about issues, there's a lot more convergence than you might imagine," said Michael Albertus, a political science professor at the University of Chicago.

A more pessimistic assessment of the country was reflected in another finding that only about 3 in 10 Americans believe the nation's democracy is functioning well. About half say the U.S. is a poorly functioning democracy, while 14% say the U.S. is not a democracy.

The tension between the broad consensus on the country's fundamental values and discontent with how well its form of govern-



The Capitol is seen as water sprinklers soak the National Mall on a hot summer morning in Washington, July 15, 2022.

Associated Press

ment is working is not a surprise, experts say.

"Part of it is really our leaders are not reflecting the electorate, and they behave in a way that's much more polarized than what the electorate is," said Lilliana Mason, a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University.

Most Americans, she said, "are pretty moderate, but they've been riled up to hate people of the other party for being different from them culturally, racially and religiously."

The AP-NORC poll also found broad agreement on the importance of some key values for the U.S.'s identity as a country. About three-quarters of U.S. adults agree that a democratically elected government is extremely or very important, and about 8 in 10 think the same about the ability of people living in the U.S. to get good jobs and achieve the American dream.

But what achieving that dream means and which values are most fundamental to American culture isn't something all Americans agree on.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans 71% to 38% to believe that the ability to come to the U.S. from elsewhere in the world to escape violence or find economic opportu-

nities is core to the country's identity. A majority of Republicans, 58%, think a culture grounded in Christian values and beliefs is an essential characteristic, compared to only 18% of Democrats.

Juan Sierra, 51, a naturalized citizen whose family immigrated from the Dominican Republic after a hurricane destroyed his father's cement business, said it is very important to him that the U.S. be seen as a place of opportunity.

The industrial technician in Port St. Lucie, Florida, said he believes democracy is working and will continue to do so "as long as there are good people in government."

Sierra also said it was extremely important that people have freedom of religion, although he had concerns over the nation's identity being tied to Christianity.

"We're seeing what happens right now when laws are passed and decisions are made based on someone's religion," he said, citing the Alabama Supreme Court ruling in February that frozen embryos can be considered children and be afforded legal protections, a decision that temporarily halted IVF procedures in the state.

Susan Johnson, a 76-year-old Republican living in the

Dallas suburbs, said the nation's standing as a beacon to others who need refuge is very important, but said that could not override concerns about border security.

"We need people working," she said. "We just need them to come the right way."

Johnson also said she believes it's extremely important that the nation's identity be grounded in spirituality.

"Whether or not you're Mormon or a Muslim or a Christian, they just have to have some higher power to reach up to," she said. "The country is going to fall apart if we don't believe in God."

The poll found few divisions on democracy as a system in theory, but it identified one notable gap: younger Americans between the ages of 18 to 29 were less likely than those 60 and older to say the U.S. is a well-functioning democracy. They're also less likely than older Americans to believe that some characteristics are essential to the U.S.'s character as a nation, including having a democratically elected government. About 6 in 10 younger adults see this as important, compared to about 9 in 10 older adults. Palakjot Singh, a 21-year-old college student in Fres-

no, California, identified himself as a Republican and said he had a better quality of life when Donald Trump was president. He said the U.S. is not a well-functioning democracy in part because people are not open to debating different points of view compared to previous generations.

"There is not good communication," he said. "Nobody is sitting together trying to get to one point."

Howard Lavine, a political science professor at the University of Minnesota, said the generational split is understandable. Many younger people don't remember a time when those with opposing views and from different political backgrounds could get together and "come over to your house." Their frame of reference is the hyper partisanship of the Trump years, he said.

Joe Lagle, 55, a retired Air Force veteran in Colorado Springs who said he has not voted for either President Joe Biden or Trump, said the nation's various rights are "all important" but believes they are being eroded by intolerance and well-meaning but shortsighted people.

Mike Maloy, 41, an engineer in Greensboro, North Carolina, said having those rights and freedoms "doesn't necessarily mean the U.S. is a functioning democracy."

"Everything is run by a handful of people and their corporations," he said. "That's not a democracy." A Democrat, Maloy cited as an example this year's presidential primary in North Carolina, when Biden was the lone candidate on the ballot. He called that "frustrating" and said the result was that voters "had no choice."

The poll of 1,282 adults was conducted March 21-25, 2024, using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. □

Scathing federal report rips Microsoft for shoddy security, insincerity in response to Chinese hack

By **FRANK BAJAK**
AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — In a scathing indictment of Microsoft corporate security and transparency, a Biden administration-appointed review board issued a report Tuesday saying “a cascade of errors” by the tech giant let state-backed Chinese cyber operators break into email accounts of senior U.S. officials including Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

The Cyber Safety Review Board, created in 2021 by executive order, describes shoddy cybersecurity practices, a lax corporate culture and a lack of sincerity about the company’s knowledge of the targeted breach, which affected multiple U.S. agencies that deal with China.

It concluded that “Microsoft’s security culture was inadequate and requires an overhaul” given the company’s ubiquity and critical role in the global technology ecosystem. Microsoft products “underpin



Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, left, listens during a Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation hearing titled “CHIPS and Science Implementation and Oversight”, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

essential services that support national security, the foundations of our economy, and public health and safety.”

The panel said the intrusion, discovered in June by the State Department and

dating to May “was preventable and should never have occurred,” blaming its success on “a cascade of avoidable errors.” What’s more, the board said, Microsoft still doesn’t know how the hackers got

in. The panel made sweeping recommendations, including urging Microsoft to put on hold adding features to its cloud computing environment until “substantial security improvements

have been made.”

It said Microsoft’s CEO and board should institute “rapid cultural change” including publicly sharing “a plan with specific timelines to make fundamental, security-focused reforms across the company and its full suite of products.”

In a statement, Microsoft said it appreciated the board’s investigation and would “continue to harden all our systems against attack and implement even more robust sensors and logs to help us detect and repel the cyber-armies of our adversaries.”

In all, the state-backed Chinese hackers broke into the Microsoft Exchange Online email of 22 organizations and more than 500 individuals around the world including the U.S. ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns accessing some cloud-based email boxes for at least six weeks and downloading some 60,000 emails from the State Department alone, the 34-page report said. □

Houthis may be running low on their weapons stocks as attacks on ships slow, US commander says

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Houthi rebels in Yemen may be running through their

supplies of drone swarms and anti-ship ballistic missiles as the pace of their attacks has slowed a bit, the top U.S. Air Force com-

mander for the Middle East said Wednesday.

Lt. Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich, who heads U.S. Air Forces Central, said that the persistent American retaliatory strikes on the Iran-backed militia group have “certainly affected their behavior. Their pace of operations is not what it was.”

The Houthis have been conducting near daily attacks on commercial and military ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, launching drones and missiles from rebel-held areas of Yemen. The attacks which are often unsuccessful but at times have struck the ships have disrupted a crucial shipping route.

In response, the U.S. and allies have been forced to increase their military ship presence along the waterway, and on several occa-

sions have launched wider retaliatory strikes on ammunition, weapons and other facilities. U.S. ships and fighter jets have also been routinely bombing Houthi drones and missiles that are in place and preparing to launch.

Grynkeiwich said it’s difficult to know exactly how much the Houthis’ weapons supplies have been eroded by the U.S. strikes, because officials didn’t have a detailed intelligence assessment of their capabilities before the attacks began. “The challenge for us is understanding what the denominator was at the beginning. In other words, what did they have on hand to start with? We obviously know how much we have struck and we have assessments of how successful those strikes were.”

he said. “The other complicating factor is Iranian resupply.” He said the U.S. believes the Houthis had dozens of anti-ship ballistic missiles when they started, and they’ve launched dozens. So understanding how much Iran is able to restock the group is key.

The Houthis have defended their campaign as an effort to pressure Israel to end its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The ships they’ve targeted, however, have largely had little or no connection to Israel, the U.S. or other nations involved in the war.

Speaking to reporters, Grynkeiwich said the Houthis are more independent and more difficult for Iran to control than other Tehran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria. □



Lt. Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich, the head of U.S. Air Force Central, speaks at a news conference at the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Sept. 20, 2023.

Associated Press

Panama and Colombia fail to protect migrants on Darien jungle route, Human Rights Watch says

By MANUEL RUEDA
Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) —

Colombia and Panama are failing to protect hundreds of thousands of migrants who cross the Darien jungle on their way to the U.S. and have become increasingly vulnerable to robberies and sexual violence, Human Rights Watch said in a report published on Wednesday.

The watchdog called on both countries to appoint high-level officials to coordinate the response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Darien and recommended that their governments work jointly to improve security and ensure more assistance from international groups.

"Whatever the reason for their journey, migrants and asylum-seekers crossing the Darien Gap are entitled to basic safety and respect for their human rights along the way," Juanita Goebertus, Americas director of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement issued before the report's publication.

Goebertus also called on



Migrants walk across the Darien Gap from Colombia to Panama on their long and difficult journey to reach the United States, May 9, 2023.

Panama's government to reconsider a recent decision to suspend the medical charity, Doctors Without Borders, also known as MSF, from operating in its territory.

"Restricting MSF's work is exactly the opposite of what is needed to address the situation in the Darien

Gap," Goebertus said.

Human Rights Watch's recommendations come as record numbers of migrants cross the Darien jungle on their way to the U.S.

Last year, more than 520,000 people crossed the dense and roadless rainforest that stands between South America and Cen-

tral America, according to Panama's immigration department. That was twice as many as in 2022.

About half of those making the dangerous journey were Venezuelans escaping their nation's economic and political crisis. They were joined by tens of thousands of migrants

from Ecuador and Haiti, as well as about 4,000 Afghan refugees.

The trek across the rainforest can last anywhere from three to five days, with migrants paying hundreds of dollars to guides and smugglers to lead them along muddy trails and treacherous river crossings. Dozens of people have drowned.

The Colombian side of the Darien is controlled by the Gulf Clan, a drug trafficking group that is taxing local guides and earning up to \$125 for every migrant that crosses into Panama, according to estimates provided to HRW by Colombian military officials, and cited in the group's previous report on the Darien Gap, published in November.

In its most recent report, HRW said that Colombia's government should ensure that prosecutors "investigate the role of the Gulf Clan in taking migrants and asylum seekers across the Darien Gap." It also urged Colombia to increase state presence in the area and devote more resources to agencies that investigate attacks on migrants. □

Associated Press

Police remove migrants from central Paris square ahead of the Olympics

By NICOLAS GARRIGA
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French police on Wednesday removed dozens of migrants, including families with young children, from the forecourt of Paris City Hall as the capital prepares to mark 100 days to the start of the Olympic Games.

Police arrived at dawn to remove about 50 people, mostly women and children aged 3 months to 10 years, who were bundled up in strollers, under blankets or covered with plastic sheets to shield against the rain while sleeping in the plaza. The migrants packed belongings and boarded a bus to temporary local government housing in the town of Besançon in eastern France.

Aid workers are concerned that the move Wednesday is the beginning of a broader effort by Paris authorities to clear out migrants and others sleeping in the rough in the capital before the summer Olympics without providing longer-term housing options.

"They're clearing the way for the Olympic Games," Yann Manzi, a member of the migrant aid group Utopia 56, told The Associated Press during Wednesday's police operation in central Paris. "What is happening is nothing short of social cleansing of the city."

Olympics organizers have said they are working with aid groups to find solutions for those in the streets, including the many people who come from around

the world to Paris seeking refuge or employment.

Many of the families are from French-speaking African countries, including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Senegal. They have been sleeping beneath the ornate facade of the Paris monument for days, weeks and some even for months. Aid groups such as Utopia 56, have distributed food, blankets and diapers and helped some of them find temporary lodging for a night or two.

Fatoumata, a mother of two from Guinea, spent a whole month sleeping on the streets of Paris with her two children, aged 3 months and 3 years.

"It's no way to live, it's exhausting," Fatoumata said,



Migrants stand in front of the Paris City Hall, Wednesday, April 3, 2024.

Associated Press

holding the baby and clutching the toddler to her. She boarded the bus in hope that life will be better outside the capital.

"They told us we are going to the provinces, which is

better than sleeping outside with the children," Fatoumata said. She spoke on condition her full name not be published because she doesn't have residency papers. □

Zimbabwe declares drought disaster, the latest in a region where El Nino has left millions hungry

BY FARAI MUTSAKA

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)

— Zimbabwe declared a state of disaster Wednesday over a devastating drought that's sweeping across much of southern Africa, with the country's president saying it needs \$2 billion for humanitarian assistance.

The declaration was widely expected following similar actions by neighboring Zambia and Malawi, where drought linked to the El Nino weather phenomenon has scorched crops, leaving millions of people in need of food assistance.

"Due to the El Nino-induced drought ... more than 80% of our country received below normal rainfall," President Emmerson Mnangagwa said in a speech calling for international aid. The country's top priority, he said, is "securing food for all Zimbabweans. No Zimbabwean must succumb to, or die from hunger."

He appealed to United Nations agencies, local businesses and faith organiza-



James Tshuma, a farmer in Mangwe district in southwestern Zimbabwe, stands in the middle of his dried up crop field amid a drought, in Zimbabwe, Friday, March, 22, 2024.

Associated Press

tions to contribute towards humanitarian assistance.

El Nino, a naturally occurring climatic phenomenon that warms parts of the Pacific Ocean every two to seven years, has varied effects on the world's weather. In southern Africa, it typically causes below-average rainfall, but this year has seen the worst drought in decades.

In Zimbabwe, the United Nations' World Food Program has already rolled out a food assistance program targeting the 2.7 million people, nearly 20 percent of the country's population,

from January to March.

The first few months of the year are traditionally known as the "lean period," when households run short as they wait for the new harvest. However, there is little hope for replenishing food stores this year, and Mnangagwa said that even more people

than previously forecast will likely need food aid.

More than 60% of Zimbabwe's 15 million people live in rural areas, growing the food they eat, and sometimes small surpluses that can be sold to cover expenses such as school fees. With relatively little participation in the cash economy, many of those won't be able to buy food even when it's available in markets. Zimbabwe, once a regional agricultural powerhouse and grain exporter, has in recent years relied more and more on aid agencies to avert mass hunger due to extreme weather conditions such as heat waves and floods.

Mnangagwa's declaration will open the way for aid agencies to mobilize international support for more aid, but many people may still fail to get assistance, which is likely to be targeted to the most vulnerable populations due to limited resources amid a global hunger crisis and a cut in humanitarian funding by rich governments. □

Russia: U.S. shares blame in a concert hall attack claimed by Islamic militants

By JIM HEINTZ

Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP)

— The head of Russia's national security council on Wednesday contended that the United States

shares blame for the attack by gunmen on a Moscow concert hall that killed 145 people, even though a branch of the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility.

Since the March 22 attack at the Crocus City Hall, the deadliest on Russian soil in two decades, Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin have repeatedly claimed, without presenting evidence, that it was organized by Ukraine, which has been fighting a Russian invasion for more than two years.

An affiliate of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack and Kyiv has consistently denied involvement.

"They are trying to impose on us that the terrorist act was committed not by the Kyiv regime, but by supporters of radical Islamic ideology, perhaps members of the Afghan branch of IS," security council head Nikolai Patrushev said at a meeting in the Kazakhstan capital Astana of security

councils of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO is a nine-country regional security and economic bloc that includes China, India and Iran.

"However, it is much more important to quickly establish who is the customer and sponsor of this monstrous crime. Its traces lead to the Ukrainian special services. But everyone knows that the Kyiv regime is not independent and is completely controlled by the United States," Patrushev said.

Four suspected gunmen were captured the day after the attack in the Bryansk region, which borders Ukraine. Putin and other officials claim that the gunmen had arranged for passage into Ukraine. Six other suspected accomplices have also been arrested. Russia's emergencies min-

istry gave the death toll in the attack as 144, but children's rights ombudsman Maria Lvova-Belova said Wednesday that a sixth child injured in the attack had died.

The attack came two weeks after the United States Embassy in Russia issued a warning that it was monitoring reports of planned terrorist attacks on public targets. The U.S. State Department said information about the planned attacks was passed on to Russian officials.

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Wednesday declined comment in a conference call on a report in the Washington Post that U.S. officials had specifically identified Crocus City Hall as a potential target, saying that was a matter for security services. □



Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev attends a session of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) in Minsk, Belarus, Thursday, Nov. 23, 2023.

Associated Press

Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick “to-go” breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the

ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening “meal” can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include, bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.



Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, basket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means “bag”. Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba





Papillon: The butterfly effect of magnificent food



PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film “Papillon” starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island’s example where ‘life imitates art.’ The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

“We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget,” says owner Tina. As our special guest you can choose to dine inside our heartwarming airconditioned restaurant or we also offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with great ambiance of the surroundings. Perfect setting for an enjoyable time people watching while sipping on a delicious cocktail.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want some-



thing special, a different flow than the usual, then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Let the music play!

Another reason to visit us is our Live Entertainment Schedule all through the week.

Get all cozy and warmed up on Sundays and Mondays by Marisella and her enchanting acoustic tunes accompanied by percussion only.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Jairo will give you a real Saxophone treat while on Wednesday you can sit back, relax and enjoy your dinner while DJ Jason brings you the most smooth jazz and lounge music for a dreamy night.

The musicians interact with the guests & requests can be sent in.

The live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are



set up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. “We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too”. What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Chef’s Garden 6 course dinner by Papillon

Our one of a kind executive chef Juan Ludena gets extra creative outside the kitchen of Papillon Restaurant. Serving a 6 course surprise menu featuring his International flavors and creativity with refined dishes, chef Juan Ludena is determined to give you a night to remember. Wine pairing is optional. The chef’s secret garden is located in a local replica of the Aruba traditional ‘cunucu’ house. The tropical garden is the setting for a magical in-home private dining experience.

For more information about this magnificent option, please send us an email or ask our wait staff.

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels.

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com

or call/WhatsApp + 00297 6995400

Open Daily: 5pm – 10.00pm – Early Bird from 5pm – 7pm

For all menus and specials visit the website: www.papillonaruba.com. □



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Tourists love the tradition of camping in Aruba!



On a Facebook page dedicated to tourists who have visited or are going to visit Aruba, a post about a camping setup at Rodgers Beach caught their attention for its creativity and art.

As is tradition for many years, Aru-

bans enjoy the Easter holiday days camping by the sea. A large number of Arubans, whole families, follow this tradition and enjoy a few days away from their homes by the sea.

Every year the campsites become

more elaborate. Previously, this only happened with tents, and now it has progressed to trailers as well, some even with air conditioning, elaborate tents, and much more. The campsites offer all the comforts of home to have a wonderful holiday by the sea.

Recently, a specific camping setup received attention from tourists on Facebook. It is a campsite in San Nicolas that stands out for its creativity and art.

"Sharing this campsite next to us at Rodgers Beach this morning. It made me smile. Very beautiful," the post says along with a photo of the colorful setup.

The post received positive reactions and comments from other tourists who praised this long-stand-



ing tradition of Aruba.

"How much I love this tradition"; "I liked the creativity. We always enjoy Easter"; "Love this, a wonderful tradition. Love Aruba," and "It made me smile too," are some of the comments left by tourists on this post. □

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at La Quinta Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing

Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. This lovely family was respectively honored

with certificates acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished	Visitor
(10>years	consecutively
visiting Aruba)	
Goodwill	Ambassador
(20>years	consecutively
visiting Aruba)	
Emerald	Ambassador
(35>years	consecutively

visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Emerald Ambassadors
Mr. Joseph & Mrs. Dorothy Daniello from New York, United States.
Emerald Ambassador
Jeanine Rana from New York, United States.

Mr. and Mrs. Daniello made their initial trip to Aruba in 1979, returning in 1983 with their daughter, Mrs. Jeanine Rana. Since then, their visits have been consecutive. Mrs. Rana tied the knot with Mr. Nicolea Rana, who was captivated by Aruba during his visit in 1995 and has returned annually ever since. Over the years, their circle of friends and family has also embraced

Aruba as a favored destination, joining in the tradition of regular visits.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the La Quinta Beach Resort bestowed the certificates to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination, as their home-away-from-home.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or

uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to



consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot



powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are

good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow. Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.

*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.□

*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.

Episode CXIII - 113 Art with roots

It is difficult, if not impossible, to come up with an entirely original concept in Art and when we associate art with archeology it is because we have a natural interest and love for our ancestors and their survival challenges. To reproduce rock art there must be an originality that is difficult to define within the conventional limitations of that tradition. This unusual task of reproducing prehistoric art has to free itself from the postmodern political burden and at the same time not be reactionary, which is no small thing in conservative times.

Aruban art rock inspired paintings, in particular, have an uncanny ability to tread the aesthetic and political fault-line between the Western colonial perspective and that of the Aruban cultural and the indigenous landscape memory. All these arts work is indicative of a more sophisticated re-invigoration of the islands indigenous aspect which is gaining force



in contemporary art circles. The featured works have an approach of depicting Aruba's prehistoric culture with its mixed finishes and its non-traditional use of the material in its contemporary nuances by adding to this idea as much collected material as possible and experimenting with seeds, clay, feathers, bones, metal, wood, glass, discarded paints and stones to name a few and manage to create works that show even more explicitly to their aesthetic ease with color and

composition.

In conventional art, the viewer recognizes the iconography of traditional masters, while art that evokes a prehistoric artistic past uses unique forms, creating an almost surreal way of looking at what has been seen before. Being paintings already seen attracts the viewer towards the image and, at the same time, the images themselves look back at origins, while captivating the viewer's attention, for good or for bad.

The more a viewer looks at a work of art related to archeology, the more he realizes its uniqueness; generally works that combine authentic techniques with surrealistic touches that make their finish result in a fresh and interesting expression. Each part of the archaeological inspired artwork emerges independently, and it is this strangely ambiguous aspect of the overall composition that is particularly fascinating. The curiosity motivating the capture of a native Aru-

ban sense of existence, free of external influence. In this way and in a more nuanced sense, each recycling work is related to nature and the fascination by island past cultures. Each art painting is studio-based the end-product significantly departs from any empirical image. In the same way, while these figurative work references to native pottery designs and rock art the result is a more cohesive practice then may be initially apparent.

Etnia Nativa presents an anthropological approach to what we can call ancient Aruban natural relations using art in order to understand the indigenous aesthetic creation of island native expressions.

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianaativa03@gmail.com or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.□



Article by: Etnia Nativa

Whatsapp us +297 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience

Etnia Nativa is close to the high rise hotels



Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

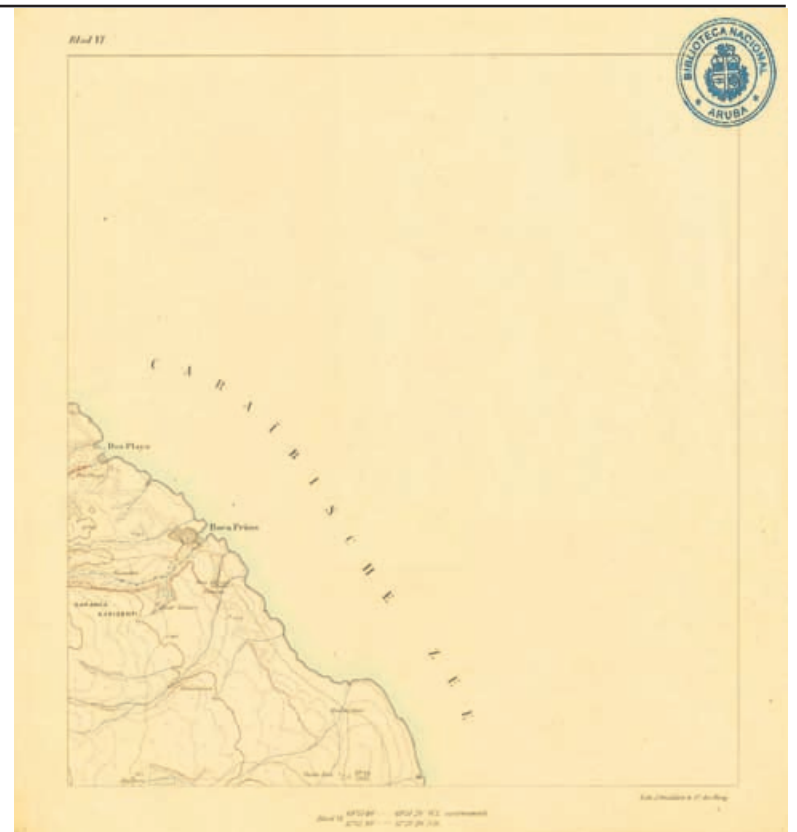
Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock



CROSSWORD

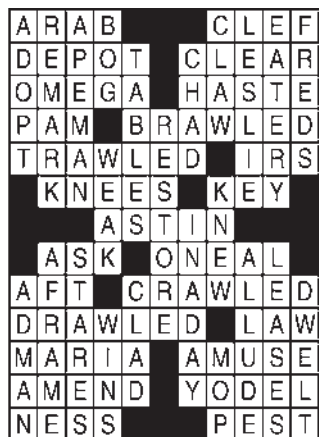
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

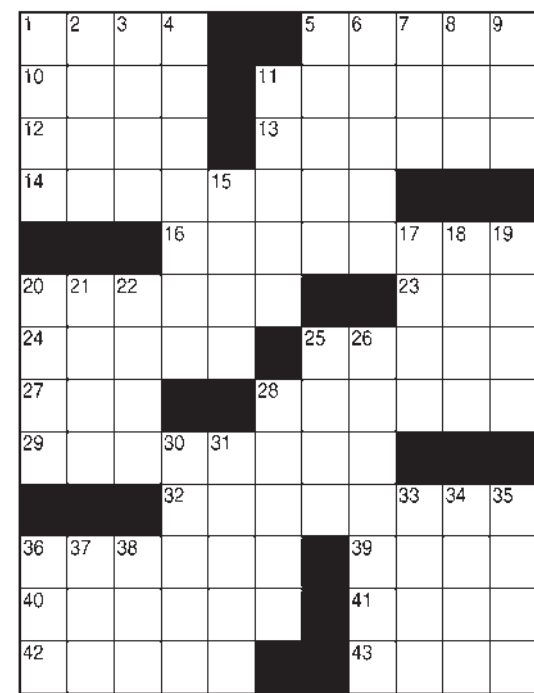
- 1 Stadium event
- 5 Deli fixture
- 10 False friend
- 11 Printer's dot
- 12 Star followers
- 13 Reformer Bloomer
- 14 Keyboard part
- 16 Place to buy a bite
- 20 Like some pools
- 23 Lamb's mom
- 24 Fixes, as a sock
- 25 Lamb's family
- 27 Eggs, to Caesar
- 28 Emmy and Tony
- 29 Tart treat
- 32 TV accessory
- 36 Draw out
- 39 Fare carrier
- 40 Sticky situation
- 41 Metal sources
- 42 Extra
- 43 Soccer legend

DOWN

- 1 Tooth holders
- 2 Pronto, in memos
- 3 Really large
- 4 Explorer Leif
- 5 Cashew family tree
- 6 Store worker
- 7 Completely
- 8 Island memento
- 9 LAX guess
- 11 Elephant of stories
- 15 Adam's grandson
- 17 Keg contents



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

CRYPTOQUOTE

ROBUDEXFRUO RN MRIGF.
ROBUDEXFRUO, RO RFNWMB,
XKUYF XOLFGROI, RN MRIGF.
— FUE NFUTTXDV

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LOVE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT YOU ARE EXPECTING TO GET — ONLY WITH WHAT YOU ARE EXPECTING TO GIVE — WHICH IS EVERYTHING. — KATHARINE HEPBURN

Cruise ship Schedule: Apr 2 - Apr 07 2024

TUE	02	OOSTERDAM RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00 08.00 09.00	17.00 21.00 22.00	B C I
WED	03	EURODAM ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON	07.00 08.00 07.00	16.00 23.00 15.00	B C I
THUS	04	NORWEGIAN SKY	08.00	20.00	C
SAT	06	SEABOURN OVATION CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00 16.00	23.00 ****	B C
SUN	07	CELEBRITY BEYOND - Dept.	****	18.00	C

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to

buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



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Week 13/Unit 1509 (14k); and,
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Ambulancia	911
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Red Cross	582 2219

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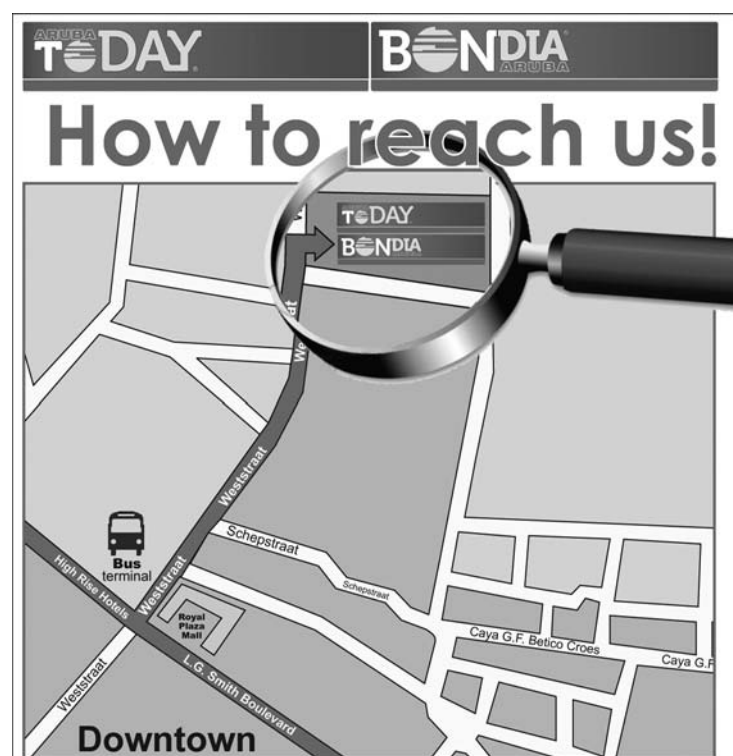
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Solar eclipse playlist: 20 songs to rock out to on your cosmic adventure

By **MARIA SHERMAN**
AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The total solar eclipse is quickly approaching. While you prepare to hit the road towards the path of total darkness or anticipate hours of traffic coming out of your watch party, you'll need something to listen to. And we've got your back. Across 20 tracks, here's a comprehensive playlist of total solar eclipse (and total solar eclipse-adjacent) songs to listen to while preparing to take in the wonders of the universe on Monday. Listen to the full playlist on Spotify.

A classic eclipse song: "Total Eclipse of the Heart" by Bonnie Tyler

There is no more appropriate song than Bonnie Tyler's karaoke classic, "Total Eclipse of the Heart." Try not to start a singalong with this one.

A rockin' eclipse song: "Blinded by the Light" by Bruce Springsteen

Not the synth-y cover by Manfred Mann's Earth Band. Bruce Springsteen's spirited "Blinded by the Light" is an eclipse song for the ages, or at least for those hoping to put a little boogie in their viewing experience.

An eclipse song to dance to: "Blinding Lights" by The Weeknd

One of the greatest pop songs of the last decade, The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights" is not only an ideal song for speeding down a highway in the darkness safely, of course, but also a Max Martin-produced earworm that will crawl into your brain and lodge itself there forevermore.

A grounded eclipse song, to remind you of the Earth: "Solar Eclipse" by YoungBoy Never Broke Again

The best YoungBoy Never Broke Again tracks bring the listener into his world: He names loved ones, he dives deep into his pain and he transforms it into affecting raps. "Solar Eclipse" centers his own mortality and what would happen



Taylor Swift arrives at the world premiere of the concert film "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" in Los Angeles on Oct. 11, 2023.

to his kids if something were to happen to him. A total solar eclipse can be a time for existential thinking: This is a once-in-a-lifetime moment for many, and so it is important to value that lifetime.

An eclipse song for the introspective listener: "Moon at the Window" by Joni Mitchell

In Joni Mitchell's "Moon at the Window," a lover looks out towards the sky and sees "ghosts of the future / phantoms of the past," the folk legend sings atop jazzy instrumentation. There's a kind of melancholic whimsy here, and lyrical poetry, which makes this song an appropriate listen for a solar eclipse.

A throwback eclipse song: "Blue Moon" by Billie Holiday

What is a space-themed playlist without a "Blue Moon"? Originally written by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart in 1934, the song has been covered countless times over the decades, but no other hits with the soul of Billie Holiday's 1952 take.

An eclipse song for the arty folk: "Starman" by David Bowie

If space is the final frontier, David Bowie knew of its powers and on Tuesday,

with a quick listen to "Starman," we can all try a bit of his Ziggy Stardust.

An eclipse song for people very much in touch with the universe: "Space is the Place" by Sun Ra

The beauty of Sun Ra's "Space is the Place" is that it's taken from a 1970s Afrofuturist film of the same name. Start with the song and watching the eclipse in real time, end with a screening.

A righteous eclipse song: "Eclipse" by Earl Sweatshirt

Consider the distorted, reversed production of Earl Sweatshirt's short rap track as an interlude for this playlist: a palate cleanser with a message.

The "it isn't an eclipse song, but it also isn't not an eclipse song" eclipse song: "Moonlight" by Jay-Z

"Moonlight," an undercelebrated cut from Jay-Z's momentous 2017 album "4:44," considers frequent exploitation of Black artists in entertainment. It's not an eclipse song in a traditional sense but considering his once-in-a-lifetime star power and that of his collaborators it feels like a fitting inclusion.

A sexy eclipse song: "Moonlight" by Kali Uchis

ter love, loss and divine femininity and so does her hit "Moonlight." In this sweet moment of pop astrology, the moon is a source of power.

An eclipse song for the Swiftie in your life: "Seven" by Taylor Swift

Looking up at the sky as a symbol of ambition, hope, nostalgia or innocence has a long literary history. It also functions as the perfect visual for Taylor Swift's "Folklore" cut "Seven." Swifties know what's up.

An idyllic eclipse song: "Moonshadow" by Cat Stevens

What is more fitting for an afternoon eclipse than the soft folk stylings of Cat Stevens' "Moonshadow"? It doubles as a great road trip song for country road driving, too, so for those who are traveling take note.

A dreamy eclipse song: "The Moon and the Sky" by Sade

From Sade's 2010 comeback album "Soldier of Love" comes "The Moon and the Sky," a soft soul song good enough for Earth and what exists above.

A romantic eclipse song: "Eclipse" by JACE Carrillo and Alyko

Venezuelan Canadian pop singer JACE Carrillo teams up with producer Alyko

for this summery, romantic slow burn, "Eclipse." This is the one you'll want to turn up if you're planning on watching the total eclipse with your partner.

An eclipse song to get the afternoon party started: "La Noche de Anoche" by Bad Bunny and Rosalía

The eclipse will hit North America in the afternoon, so a full-on club banger is a little too nighttime for this daytime event. However, some sultry down-tempo reggaetón? That's on the table, courtesy Bad Bunny and Rosalía.

An R&B-pop bop for the eclipse: "Eclipse" by LOONA's Kim Lip

Not long after K-pop girl group LOONA debuted, Kim Lip was announced its sixth member and her solo single "Eclipse" was released a R&B bubblegum-pop song that confirmed her talents. Seven years on, its pleasant pop is worthy of this playlist.

An eclipse song that will immediately inspire a dance lesson: "Eclipse" by GOT 7

K-pop boy group Got7 marry future bass and anthemic rock in this barn-burner of a pop song. Give yourself a few hours to learn the choreography to keep yourself occupied while you wait for totality to hit.

An explosive eclipse song for those who feel lonely when the moon covers the sun: "Eclipse" by MAMAMOO's Moonbyul

Moonbyul's "Eclipse" begins with a fake out: delicate production explodes into hard-hitting trap production and a gothic chorus loud synths and chugging guitars. "When the moon covers the sun / It feels like I'm alone," the K-pop girl group member sings, but that isolation doesn't last long.

The eclipse song that has to be present on every eclipse playlist: "Eclipse" by Pink Floyd

Can an eclipse playlist exist without ending with the massive drums and Hammond organ of Pink Floyd's "Eclipse"? We think not. □

Yankees manager Aaron Boone has a rule for new outfielder Alex Verdugo: One chain per game

By KRISTIE RIEKEN

AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — During his time with the Boston Red Sox, Alex Verdugo frequently played with several gaudy chains bouncing around his neck. He packs at least six for every road trip, and he's lost count of how many he owns.

In his first season with the famously clean-cut New York Yankees, Verdugo has been given an order by manager Aaron Boone: only one chain per game.

"It's kind of been hard, man," Verdugo said. "Because usually I'm used to wearing like three or four."

Verdugo looks like a new man with New York, stripped of all but one diamond-studded necklace so far this season and also missing his signature ginger beard. The Yankees have a strict appearance policy put in place by owner George Steinbrenner in 1976 that, among other things, limits hair length and bans facial hair besides mustaches. The policy has been criticized in recent years, including by former players Andrew McCutchen and Cameron Maybin, for limiting the ways players



New York Yankees' Alex Verdugo pauses in the dugout during the seventh inning of a baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks Tuesday, April 2, 2024, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

can express themselves. After being traded from Boston to New York in December, Verdugo is playing ball with the policy. He wore the same necklace for each game in New York's season-opening series against the Houston Astros. The chain is modest by his standards, with square-shaped, diamond-covered pieces that cost him about \$15,000.

Before leaving the ballpark following one of those games in Houston, he layered several other chains over the one he'd worn on the field. The largest was a thick and wide diamond-encrusted Cuban link with a huge No. 24 pendant, also covered in diamonds, hanging off it.

This one, he says, he'd never wear with the pendant in a game for fear of "knock-

ing myself in the face."

"So, I wear this big one just like outside, getting to the field for more style and then take it off because it's way too big," he said.

He does plan to wear the chain without the pendant as his one-game chain at some point this season.

The No. 24 pendant is new for this season, replacing the No. 99 that adorned the chain last season when

he played for Boston. Now that 99 is no longer his number because it's worn by Yankees captain Aaron Judge, he's trying to figure out what to do with the old pendant.

"Judgey wants my 99. I said we'll see about it, got to see how this year goes," Verdugo said with a laugh. Hearing Verdugo's comment, Judge turned around with a big smile and said: "I've got to earn it."

Verdugo says he can't keep up with how many chains he has because he's always "re-upping" every time he visits Happy Jewelers, which is in California near Angel Stadium. Arizona's Joc Pederson introduced him to the jeweler when the two played together for the Dodgers.

Though Verdugo loves his Cuban link with the number pendant, it's not No. 1 on his list. That honor belongs to a chain that has a very special meaning related to his mother, Shelly.

"My favorite chain is actually a custom one that I got built for my mom who was going through breast cancer," he said. "I did breast cancer ribbons with hearts connecting all of them. □"

Fox, AEG announce launch of College Basketball Crown postseason tournament

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fox Sports and AEG will launch a new postseason college basketball tournament next year.

The College Basketball Crown will be a 16-team tournament that will take place March 31 through April 6, 2025, in Las Vegas. The games will take place at the MGM Grand Garden Arena and T-Mobile Arena. Both venues have hosted college basketball games in the past, including the Pac-12 tournaments.

Teams that did not qualify for the NCAA Tournament will be eligible. The Big Ten, Big 12 and Big East whose games are carried on Fox

will each have two automatic entries. The additional teams will be selected by

a committee.

"Postseason college basketball is one of the most



An official game ball sits on the court during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game between Southern California and UCLA in the semifinals of the Pac-12 tournament Friday, March 8, 2024, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

exciting times of year and FOX Sports is proud to be at the forefront of efforts to evolve and elevate the sport," said Fox Sports EVP Jordan Bazant in a statement. "Alongside AEG and the Big Ten, Big 12 and Big East, we are thrilled to provide more opportunities for student-athletes to compete in high quality postseason college hoops and for viewers to enjoy the chase for the College Basketball Crown."

The tournament is expected to be the biggest competitor to the National Invitation Tournament. The NCAA, which runs the NIT, changed its selection pro-

cess this season to include more teams from Power Six conferences.

However, at least eight schools all but one being from one of the power conferences declined invitations or said in advance it would not participate in the 32-team tournament.

The NIT is college basketball's oldest major postseason tournament and once its most prestigious. Games were played at New York City's Madison Square Garden from 1938 until 2019. The 2022 final returned to the Garden, but last year's final four was in Las Vegas with this year's taking place this week in Indianapolis. □

The Buffalo Bills agree to trade top receiver Stefon Diggs to the Houston Texans

By JOHN WAWROW

AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP)

— The Buffalo Bills are trading their top receiving threat, Stefon Diggs, to the Houston Texans in a deal that was agreed to on Wednesday.

In announcing the trade, the Bills acquired the Texans' second-round pick in the 2025 draft, which Houston acquired in a trade with Minnesota. Houston also acquired Buffalo's sixth-round pick in this year's draft, and a fifth-rounder in 2025.

Diggs' departure from Buffalo leaves quarterback Josh Allen without his favorite target, and breaks up a



Buffalo Bills wide receiver Stefon Diggs (14) runs after a catch during an NFL divisional round playoff football game, Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024 in Orchard Park, N.Y.

Associated Press

tandem that has re-written the team's passing records since the receiver's arrival in a trade with Minnesota in March 2020. Together they transformed a Bills offense into becoming one of the NFL's most potent, while helping Buffalo win four straight AFC East titles. For the Texans, Diggs gives the offense another playmaker to team with Nico Collins and Tank Dell. Collins led Houston with 80 receptions for 1,297 yards and eight touchdowns last season. The Texans went worst to first in the AFC South under first-year coach DeMeco Ryans and AP Offensive Rookie of the Year C.J. Stroud.

Houston has also traded for running back Joe Mixon, along with a host of improvements on defense.

After the deal, the Texans were 15-1 to win the Super Bowl next season on FanDuel Sportsbook.

The 30-year-old Diggs has nine years of NFL experience and topped 1,000 yards in each of his past six seasons. In his first season in Buffalo, he became the Bills' first player to lead the league in both yards receiving (1,535) and catches (127). Diggs' production began slipping in the second half of last season, which coincided with Buffalo firing offensive coordinator Ken Dorsey and promoting Joe Brady, who placed a renewed emphasis on the running attack. Diggs finished the season with 107 catches and 1,183 yards both lows during his tenure with the Bills and eight touchdowns. He finished his time in Buffalo with 445 catches for 5,372 yards and 37 touchdowns to rank fourth on the team list. Diggs holds the top four spots on the franchise list for single-season receptions and the top-two spots for yards receiving. Overall, he has 1,178 catches for 9,995 yards and 67 touchdowns since being selected by the Vikings in the fifth round of the 2015 draft out of Maryland. □



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